

Comprehensive American Energy Security & Consumer Protection Act Passes House

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) today voted in favor of comprehensive energy legislation that will help bring down energy costs, invest in renewable energy sources to create American jobs, expand domestic drilling offshore and on land and increase our security by freeing America from the grip of foreign oil. If signed into law, the Comprehensive American Energy Security & Consumer Protection Act would represent the largest opening of land offshore for oil and gas development in our nation's history and invests billions into alternative energy.

"I'm proud that the House has passed the most comprehensive energy legislation in two decades," Wilson said. "Americans have been waiting for a sound energy policy and have paid the price because we haven't had one. This is a way to get gas prices and move America forward."

The energy bill will roll back tax breaks for Big Oil in a time of record oil company profits and require oil companies to pay royalties already owed to taxpayers. The legislation permits drilling in waters between 50 and 100 miles offshore if the state allows leasing off its coastline by enacting a state law. The area past 100 miles to approximately 200 miles off the coast (international waters) would also be open for business. In addition, the energy bill lifts the moratorium on the development of oil shale in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. The resource potential of oil shale is estimated to be the equivalent of 1.8 trillion barrels of oil.

In addition, the legislation invests in wind, solar and natural gas; this will create millions of jobs. The bill requires that by 2020 utility companies generate 15 percent of electricity from renewable sources, like wind power, biomass, wave, tidal, geothermal and solar. This will save consumers \$13-18 billion cumulatively by 2020 and reduce global warming emissions.

The Act also takes steps to immediately bring down the price of gasoline by temporarily releasing nearly 10 percent of the oil from the government's stockpile – the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) – and replacing it later with heavier, cheaper crude oil.

“This bill does what Republicans failed to do during the 12 years they controlled Congress,” Wilson said. “It provides our nation with a comprehensive energy plan. A ‘drill only’ plan is short-sighted. The bill we passed tonight includes both oil drilling and alternative energy. And alternative energy means jobs in Ohio.”

The New Direction Congress has taken critical steps to address our nation’s energy independence. Last year, Congress passed and the President signed historic energy legislation with provisions to combat oil market manipulation, increase vehicle fuel efficiency to 35 miles per gallon in 2020 – the first Congressional increase in more than three decades – and promote the use of more affordable American biofuels.